

News from the Oklahoma Army National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oklahoma Army National Guard Soldier killed in Afghanistan

The Department of Defense announced today the name of an Oklahoma Army National Guard Soldier killed in action while serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Sgt. Buddy Hughie, 25, of Poteau, Okla., was killed in action on February 19, 2007, in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan.

Hughie and his unit were part of a joint mission with the Afghan National Army and the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division. While returning from an undisclosed operation the joint force came under enemy small arms and RPG fire.

Hughie and his team members dismounted their vehicle and returned fire. During the fire fight two Afghan Army soldiers were wounded. Seeing that his Afghan comrades were wounded, Hughie left his covered position to provide medical assistance to them. Shortly after leaving his covered position, Hughie was killed by small arms fire.

"Sgt. Buddy Hughie was a great American," said Lt. Col. Bobby Yandell, Commander of the 1st Battalion, 180th Infantry. Hughie did not have to deploy with 180th because he had

deployed to Afghanistan in 2002-2003 with an Engineer unit from South Carolina. “He volunteered to deploy with the 180th because he believed in the mission and he believed in his fellow 1/180th Soldiers. Sgt. Hughie was one of those Soldiers that you did not have to worry about; he always did the right thing. We mourn his loss, but celebrate the life of a great Soldier,” said Yandell.

“It is difficult to find the words to express the depth of loss felt at a time like this,” said Brig. Gen. Myles L. Deering, Commander of the 45th Infantry Brigade. “Sgt. Hughie served his country with pride and a dedication to duty that was unparalleled. The men and women of the 45th Infantry Brigade will never forget the sacrifice that Sgt. Hughie has made for his country. Our thoughts and prayers are with Sgt. Hughie’s family and loved ones, and I pray that God will comfort them during their time of grief. Our thoughts are also with the soldiers still in Afghanistan who are also mourning the loss of their comrade and friend and who must continue to stand watch,” said Deering.

The 180th deployed to Afghanistan last summer as part of a multinational task force whose mission is to train and mentor Soldiers in the new Afghan National Army. Members of the 180th Infantry are providing security for the international coalition of trainers and the Afghan trainees.

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NOTICE TO THE MEDIA: The family of Sgt. Hughie does not wish to speak with the media and asks that you respect their privacy during this painful and difficult time. Please refer all queries to the Oklahoma Army National Guard’s Office of Public Affairs at (405) 228-5212.